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Assistant Director for Operations

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Acting Chief, FBIB

Relative Dearth of Soviet Radio Comment  
on Recently Increased Berlin Tension

1. In view of the great amount of attention given by the American and west European press and radios to the recent and current Berlin tension, it should be noted that, by comparison, the Soviet radio to date has slighted the whole situation and has yet made little effort either to publicize or to exploit it.

2. To date, the only monitored Soviet radio references to the situation have been limited [redacted] [redacted] Soviet provincial press (a duplicate of one of those to North America), a Morse transmission (to the Soviet Embassy in Nanking) of a Soviet Information Bureau review of "What Is Happening in Berlin," and two Soviet Home Service broadcasts. Of the latter, a brief report on 6 April tells of the air crash between the Soviet fighter and the British passenger aircraft, explaining that the latter "cut into the tail" of the Soviet plane.

The second Home Service broadcast (7 April), considerably more significant, is a newscast devoted entirely to detailed explanation of both the Soviet frontier control actions themselves and of the ostensible reasons for such actions. The reasons listed boil down to two: (1) the utilization of "Allied military trains" for the illegal movement into the Soviet zone of western Germans in search of food and work, and for the illegal entry of "speculators, bandits, spies, and other criminal elements"; and (2) Anglo-American-French removal from the Soviet zone, in violation of established agreements, of "considerable quantities of valuable property." Because of these "facts," says the broadcast, "and in the interests of the observation of legality and to insure the safety of goods on the territory of the Soviet zone, the Soviet occupation authorities were forced to adapt certain supplementary measures" which are listed.

In this particular broadcast, however, Moscow shows little emotional belligerence, adopting instead a tone of presumed reasonableness. "It should be noted," says Moscow, "...that the Soviet Military Administration is anxious to cooperate in the effort to promote interpersonal ties. but demands, however, organization, order, and control in the interests of passengers and goods as well as for the prevention of (rumors?) which seek to cause a lack of confidence in the relations among the occupation authorities...." And, noting the Anglo-American-French protests against the examination of passengers and freight, Moscow professes to be at a loss as to why the American authorities prefer to furnish only copies of the documents, and not the documents themselves, and why they "do not want the Soviet patrols to examine personally the documents of persons passing through the Soviet zone and thus avoid misunderstandings." Even with reference to the alleged Anglo-American-French removal of "valuable

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- 2 -

property" from the Soviet zone the broadcast is relatively restrained in tone: "possibly because of these doubts (allegedly expressed by the British, American, and French authorities about the continued presence of the authorities in Berlin), they have, during the past half year, begun to move from Berlin--by rail, truck, waterways, and air--commodities, raw materials, and other materials to the western zones." As to the reaction to the supplementary measures, the broadcast is completely silent about comment from the western press (in contrast to Soviet-controlled German radios which disparage western "alarmism" and "sensationalism"), but claims that "as may have been expected, the order was hailed with satisfaction by all those who respect the law" and was received negatively only by "those who are violators of law and order." The broadcast also attempts to give the impression that following the new Soviet measures "the movement between the Soviet and western zones continued in perfect order and without incident."

The Soviet Information Bureau's review, transmitted in Morse on 8 April to the Soviet Embassy in Nanking, adopts a similar dispassionately "reasonable" tone. Entitled, "What Is Happening in Berlin?" the review answers: Nothing particular is happening in Berlin." It then proceeds to explain the new control measures in terms of preventing further illegal entry of unwanted persons into the Soviet zone and "illegal removal of valuables from Berlin." The western press is chided for devoting so much space to the "events" in Berlin, whereas actually they represent only legitimate Soviet measures in "the interests of the city's three million inhabitants and the population of the entire Soviet zone." And "what reasonable person can object to these legal measures?" The BBC, REUTERS, and "even the POPULAIRE" are said to "have been forced to acknowledge the legitimacy of the Soviet occupation authorities' measures."

25X1 Of the relevant [ ] transmitted both to North America and to the Soviet provincial press (8 April and 7 April, respectively) reports the "facts" established by the Soviet commission which investigated the causes of the British-Soviet plane collision, with the blame put squarely on the British plane; it also notes that General Robertson's "order for escorting British transport planes with fighters" was rescinded following "the statements of the Soviet side," and reports that a "mixed Soviet-British commission began an investigation." The other [ ] (to North America, 1 April) reports Soviet-zone press explanations of the Soviet action in terms of "measures taken... to protect the Berlin economy against plunder."

25X1 It should be noted that the Soviet-controlled German press and radio are quite vociferous both in their defense of the "justified" Soviet measures and in their disparagement of the "alarmist" western press reaction. The German

population is said to be taking the whole situation in its stride, and has even welcomed the "protection" offered by the control measures. "All rumors about

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- 3 -

disquiet are fundamentally wrong," stated Colonel Tulpanov, head of the SMA's Information Bureau, in an interview with the Leipzig radio's commentator Hans Meassen on 2 April. And "all the attempts of the western-licensed press to make a political situation out of the new frontier regulations have remained unsuccessful."

3. Whatever the motives behind the Soviet frontier control measures, it is apparent that they were at least not designed for immediate propaganda exploitation by the Soviet radio, which has rather played down the Berlin situation in feigned surprise over the great amount of attention given it by the western press.

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